(c) whether the World Bank has agreed to provide financial assistance to Tamil Nadu for the said purpose, and

(d) if so, by when the financial assistance is likely to be provided.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (c) Government of Tamil Nadu has sought assistance of World Bank for upgrading the State road network to manage the growing traffic intensity besides reconstructing and rehabilitating the distressed bridges and culverts. The estimated cost of the project is about Rs. 880 crores. The exact amount of World Bank funding may be known only after the components to be included in the project are identified on completion of strategic option study.

(d) It is too early to indicate the time at this stage.

Appointment of agents by SCI

4686. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of agents appointed by the Shipping Corporation of India all over the country and the details thereof;

(b) what are the guidelines the Corporation has fixed for appointment of these agents, and since when these agents have been operating at various ports;

(c) whether there is any proposal to appoint additional agents for any of the ports, in view of the increased exports and imports, and to encourage young entrepreneurs; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) The Shipping Corporation of India has appointed 10 agents at various Indian ports, viz. Gujarat, Karwar, Jawahar Lal Nehru Port, Pondicherry, Mangalore, Cochin, Kakinada, Nagapattnam, Masulipatnam, Allepey, Quilon, Tuticorin, Calicut, Tellicharry, Rameshwaram, Vizag & Cuddalore. Besides, SCI has also appointed agents at some Inland Container Depots (ICDs).

(b) SCI contacts some reputable agency houses for the appointment of agents. The factors which are considered for appointment as agents are sound financial position professional expertise, experience, cargo generating/handling capacity, manpower, availability of physical infrastructure, etc. The existing 10 agents were appointed by SCI from time to time since 1961.

(c) and (d) The appointment of agents by SCI is a continuous process, depending on the trade-patterns.

Letters written by M.Ps to the Ministry of Surface Transport

4687. SHRI MOHAMMAD AFZAL alias MEEM AFZAL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of letters written by the Members of Parliament to the Ministry during the period from 1st April, 1994 to 31st March, 1995;

(b) what is the number of letters acknowledged out of them;

(c) what is the number of letters in respect of which final replies were sent; and

(d) what is the break-up of final letters issued by the Ministry containing positive and negative replies, respectively?